

## Funding Opportunity for Maine Public Schools to Become BARR Schools

Presented by:  
Jennifer Fox, Strategic Growth Officer  
[jennifer.fox@barrcenter.org](mailto:jennifer.fox@barrcenter.org) | (651) 587-2121

Inside:

1. Introduction to BARR and funding opportunity
2. How BARR works in schools
3. Evidence of effectiveness
4. Testimonials and references
5. Services provided

Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) is a K-12 comprehensive, strength-based approach to education that increases achievement for all students by improving a school's effectiveness at building relationships, leveraging real-time student data, and capitalizing on the strengths of students and staff.

## Introduction to BARR and Funding Opportunity

Applications are now open to all willing and qualified Maine public schools who would like to become a BARR (Building Assets, Reducing Risks) school. The Maine Department of Education (DOE) will cover all costs of implementing the program for schools new to BARR (\$80,000+ value), and all costs of continued implementation support to existing BARR schools (\$17,500+ value). Additionally, the DOE will provide travel reimbursement and educator stipends associated with participation in the program. **Applications are due by May 26, 2023.**

BARR was developed over 20 years ago by a high school counselor who felt ineffective because more than 40 percent of her 9th grade students were failing at least one core course and were at risk for not graduating on time. She learned from her school's principal that this was not just her high school's problem, but it reflected a troubling national trend. Using strategies from the fields of business and medicine, Executive Director Angela Jerabek created the BARR model and implemented it in the fall of 1998. By spring 1999, 9th grade student failure rate had decreased from 44% the previous year to 20%. Teachers worked together and knew each student – not just from an academic perspective, but from a personal perspective – their interests, strengths, hopes, and dreams.

Careful implementation and evaluation continued for over 20 years, all with the same findings – students passed more classes, pursued more advanced courses, and graduated on time. The focus of BARR is not just for some students, but all students. Teachers reported increased collaboration, satisfaction, and their ability to use data effectively. School culture and climate was improved. Today, BARR operates in over 250 schools throughout the nation and works in all grade levels, K-12, including in dozens of schools here in Maine. BARR is now available for elementary, middle and high schools to provide a system that produces multiple positive results.

"There is no question that BARR has had a positive impact on the students and staff at Sacopee Valley Middle School. We are intervening with students earlier, our meetings are more efficient, and most importantly, our relationships are stronger. Honestly, I couldn't imagine our school without BARR. It is not a flavor of the month intervention — it is now part of our fabric and is here to stay," said Amy Vacchiano, counselor and BARR Coordinator at Sacopee Valley Middle School.

To be eligible, a school must meet one of the following:

- a SAU as defined under as defined under [20-A M.R.S.A Section 1](#), Subsection 26; or
- a publicly supported secondary school as defined under [20-A M.R.S.A Section 1](#), Subsection 23-B, B; or
- the Education in the Unorganized Territory (EUT) under [20-A M.R.S.A Chapter 119](#).

**Any district or school that is considering this opportunity should know that there is no prerequisite or requirements for getting started and being successful. No matter what the current staffing or schedule looks like, BARR will meet you where you are and help you implement in a way that will be successful at your school. Our team is here and ready to help you through the planning process.**

### [LINK TO LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

The following pages explain more about how BARR works in schools, the evidence base behind the system, the services we provide and the associated costs. Thank you for your interest and please don't hesitate to reach out with questions.



Jennifer Fox, Strategic Growth Officer  
BARR Center  
651-587-2121 or [Jennifer.fox@barrcenter.org](mailto:Jennifer.fox@barrcenter.org)

## How BARR works in Schools

The BARR system starts with a school adopting BARR's eight interconnected strategies that fundamentally change the way not just teachers, but administrators, counselors, and the rest of the school staff interact with students.

The strategies are:

1. Focus on the whole student
2. Provide professional development for teachers, counselors, and administrators
3. Use BARR's curriculum to foster a climate for learning and relationship building
4. Create cohorts to cultivate connections
5. Hold regular meetings of the cohort teacher teams to discuss each student
6. Conduct Community Connect meetings that engage the community
7. Engage families
8. Engage administrators

To implement this multifaceted strategy, BARR provides a system that translates aspiration to action. Here's how it works.

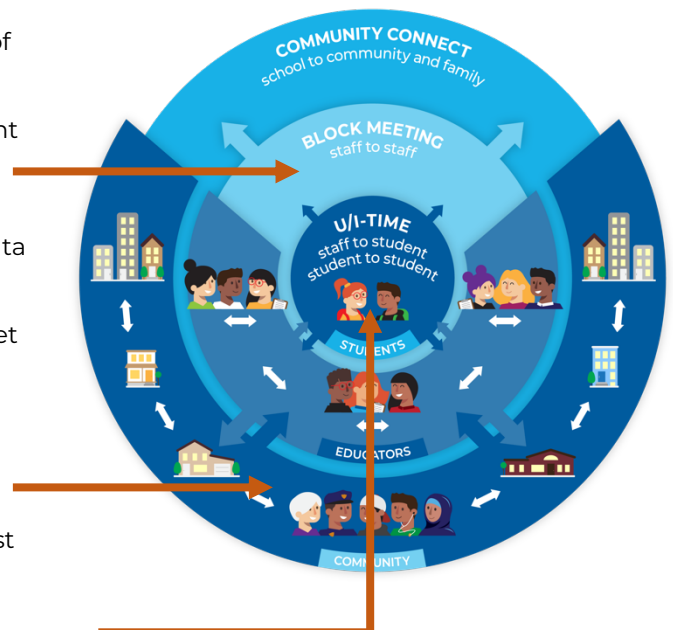
The BARR Center supports schools with adoption of the model. Specifically, we provide an initial two day in-person BARR implementation training, with two trainers, one of which typically becomes the school's dedicated BARR coach. Through weekly planning, coaching and on-site visits, the BARR coach guides school staff to ensure they get the initial lift towards high fidelity implementation and achievement of their identified school goals.

In secondary schools, BARR's model brings teachers together from core academic areas to form a team that works with many of the same students. A large middle or high school may have multiple teacher teams, each with their own student cohort. In elementary schools, there are both horizontal and vertical teams that meet to discuss students. In all cases, BARR shifts the conversation to a whole-student perspective.

That more complete view of students takes place in weekly team meetings, called block time, where teachers share observations of each student's strengths and challenges. Block time centers on real-time data – both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The team works off a spreadsheet that builds a picture of each student by reviewing a variety of in-school factors, including progress in class, attendance, and behavior. The team also discusses factors outside the school, such as extracurricular interests, personal health, issues with other students, or troubles at home. All this data collection allows the team to flag challenges early and work together to solve problems. Importantly, teachers track not just problems but student strengths to identify achievable goals to get or keep students on track for success.

For students coping with the toughest situations in and out of school, BARR's model requires a weekly Community Connect meeting that involves more specialized staff, such as the school nurse and school psychologist along with school administration. They consider the need for tapping community resources to assist with a range of issues that are not solved in the classroom.

In secondary schools, team teachers also take turns facilitating a weekly class activity called I-Time that focuses on relationship building among classmates and between teachers and students. In elementary schools, classroom teachers deliver U-Time activities weekly. BARR coaches them on how to facilitate conversations that tap into social and emotional skill development.



## Evidence of Effectiveness

Just as we believe in the power of data to shape instruction, we have always been committed to rigorous evaluation to understand whether the BARR model is working and how to keep strengthening it. The BARR model is the most proven and evidence-based school improvement model to date. The BARR model has been validated by several national organizations:

---

### Evidence for ESSA

BARR has met the Evidence for ESSA requirements for “strong evidence” four times in reading and math impacts and once in social-emotional learning (SEL). Effect sizes were highest for students of color, males, and economically disadvantaged students (Bos et al., 2019; Corsello & Sharma, 2015).



---

### Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) Program

With its first grant in 2010, BARR is the only model to successfully climb the three tiers of evidence (development, validation, and scale-up) under the U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) program for its research in ninth grade (Bos, Dhillon, & Borman, 2019; Corsello & Sharma, 2015).



---

### Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

The U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) review concluded that BARR's research “met evidence standards without reservation,” the highest possible WWC rating, in three separate studies for credits earned in core courses and better performance on standardized high school mathematics and English assessments (Bos, Dhillon, & Borman, 2019; Boulay et al., 2018).



---

### Collaborative for Social Emotional Learning (CASEL)

BARR is listed in the 2021 CASEL Guide to Effective Social Emotional Learning Programs as a SElect program, which is the top designation a program can earn for meeting or exceeding all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming.



The BARR model has been rigorously studied through 12 within-school randomized controlled trials (RCTs) - the gold standard (Bos et al., 2019) - and a between-school RCT with 66 schools across the nation (Bos et al., 2022). The model has a 20+-year track record of student success and has been proven to drive significant improvements in school climate measures, course credits earned, grade point averages, and standardized test scores; narrowed opportunity gaps; and decreases in failure rates, suspensions, and absenteeism.

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

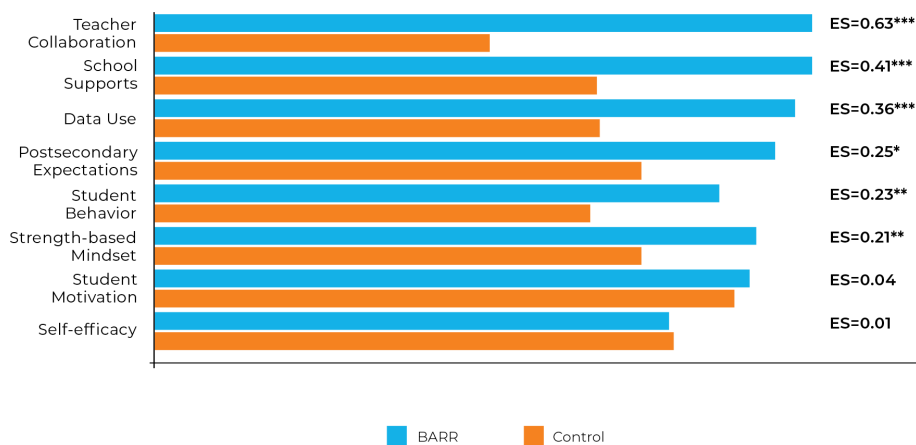
- BARR significantly impacts students' overall engagement in school (Bos et al., 2019)
- BARR significantly reduced chronic absenteeism (Bos et al., 2022). Positive effects on chronic absenteeism were strongest for male students and students of color
- BARR shows a reduction in risky behaviors (US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2007. National registry of evidence-based programs and practices. <https://www.samhsa.gov/nrepp>) including use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs and suicide ideation and attempts

## TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AND SATISFACTION

The BARR approach improved teachers' collaboration with their peers, their data use, and a range of other teacher outcomes. Among teacher outcomes, the most substantial effects were on:

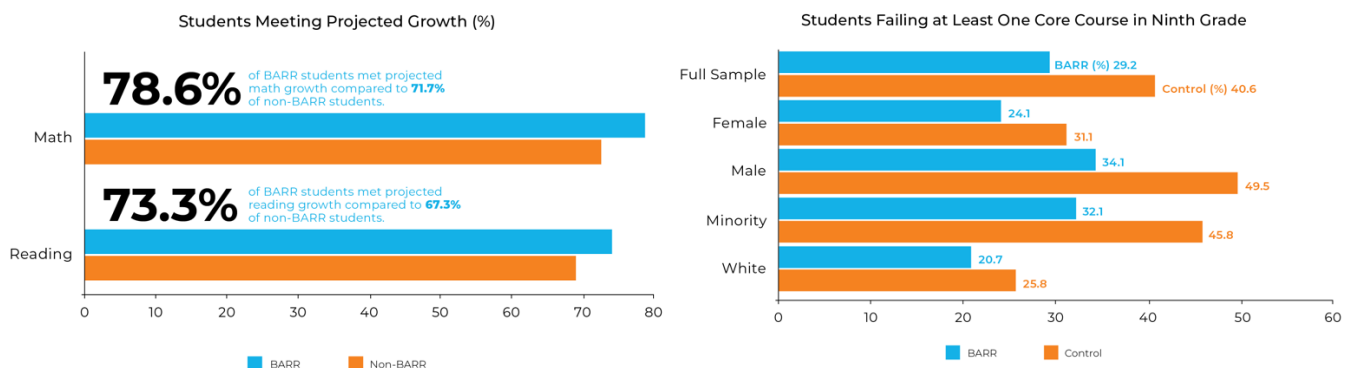
- teacher collaboration with and view of colleagues
- teacher use of data
- view of school supports

Positive effects on teacher-reported outcomes persisted even after schools operated virtually for much of the 2019–20 school year due to the pandemic. (Bos et al., 2022)



## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

- BARR significantly decreases course failures (Bos et al., 2019). On average, schools see a 40% reduction in failure rate after one year of BARR
- BARR significantly increases core credits earned (Bos et al., 2019). These effects are strongest for male students, students of color, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, English learners, and students with disabilities
- BARR students met projected math and reading growth at higher rates than non-BARR student
- BARR students achieved higher PSAT scores compared to non-BARR students. Impacts of BARR on PSAT scores was greatest for male students, students of color, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and English learners



On average, large urban schools see a 40% reduction in failure rate after one year of BARR while smaller rural schools see a 29% reduction.

BARR works for all students, but especially those furthest from opportunity: students of color and low-income students.

## Testimonials and quotes

"BARR has changed the culture of our school. Our school board and school community has clearly identified the BARR program as one of our districts' essential pieces to student growth and achievement."

[Josh Tripp, Principal, Bucksport High School, Maine](#)

"We have been nailing systemic changes because BARR has given us the structure to identify areas where we need to make change and provide additional support to students that are struggling."

[Caroline Peinado, BARR Coordinator, Poland Regional High School, Maine](#)

"I feel as if I were a parent listening, I would feel as if the adults that I was trusting really were honoring my child by knowing them as an individual, and I think that would be reassuring to anybody to know that. Even if we're talking about the way we want to get them on track, it's with affection and knowledge and I think that's one of the best things that public education can do for a student."

[Kristin Leithiser, teacher and BARR Coordinator, Hampden Academy, Maine](#)

"If you're just talking about kids in general, it doesn't give you the structure to have those really pointed conversations about what's working and what isn't working for the child. BARR's meeting structure really helps us target, not only our interventions, but thinking about student strengths."

[Nancy Simard, BARR Coordinator, Noble High School, Maine](#)

"I can honestly say that in my 26 years in education, BARR is unequivocally, hands-down, the best program to help students that I've ever seen."

[Noel Crum, Assistant Superintendent, Johnson Central Schools, Kentucky](#)

"The BARR model is unique in that within it, an intentional network of teachers, staff, and family take specific action steps to support students in building their academic muscle. Local evidence, local results show when BARR becomes how we 'do school,' our students learn how to be successful. Access barriers are mitigated; more opportunities are opened for them. Students feel even more valued and connected to their teachers and their school, learn content and positive production behaviors better, and are more likely to graduate on time, choice ready."

[Tamara Uselman, Director of Equity and Inclusion, Fargo Public Schools, North Dakota](#)

"BARR is not something we do; it is who we are -- a school that puts students first. Teachers are focusing on students' strengths, on forming positive relationships, and systematically using data to recognize student success and support needed. BARR has transformed the way we teach. Every student is seen and every teacher shares fidelity in the process. BARR has helped us take what we already do and make it more efficient and effective. It has allowed for student-centered conversations that focus on real-time data that truly impact student achievement."

[Jennifer Napier, Librarian and BARR Coordinator, North Adams High School, Ohio](#)

"I'm really pleased to say that 100% of our BARR teachers in a final end of the year survey said that this was one of the best things that they've had in their career. In fact, a staff member who I was just talking to this morning who has taught for about 30 years said that this has been the best year of his career."

[Joe Held, Administrator and BARR Coordinator, White Bear Lake Schools, Minnesota](#)

"BARR allows us to have a holistic understanding that helps teachers to better support their students. Before, I don't think our whole team had the opportunity to share the information we have in ways that allow us to understand the totality of the student experience at times where we can plan interventions. BARR allows us to have more touchpoints with the students and fewer cracks for the kids to slip into."

[Gene Roundtree, Assistant Superintendent, Boston Public Schools, Massachusetts](#)

"Working together by using the rigorous structures of the BARR approach has helped teachers implement targeted interventions to support each student."

[Stephen Gorde, Principal, Lake Elmo Elementary School, Minnesota](#)

## Services provided

The BARR team's rigorous methodology includes several key steps to ensure that the model is implemented with fidelity at each and every school. BARR implementation is a three-year process. Each school receives two days of on-site implementation training prior to the start of the school year and selects a staff member to be the BARR Site Coordinator. This staff member functions as the contact person for coaching, organizing BARR activities, and communicating with administration. During the school year, the BARR site coordinator receives coaching each week and attends a monthly professional learning community of BARR Coordinators across the country. The school's administrator participates in BARR meetings and is invited to attend the quarterly administrator professional learning community. The administrator, BARR coordinator, and staff are encouraged to attend the annual BARR National Conference at a discounted rate. Schools receive four onsite or virtual coaching visits in year one, and three visits in years two and three.

All schools have access to BARR materials through their online member portal. Implementation manuals and the first volume of lessons are provided in hard copy format. The closer schools come to implementing BARR with fidelity, the better results they will obtain.

Services and costs are for each school in a district, unless your district is a small and rural district. A small and rural district is defined as one with 600 or less students with a rural community designation. In the case of a small and rural district, the total cost will serve all grades in the district.

### BARR Model

#### Implementation Resources and Services Provided

##### Year 1:

- Coaching:
  - Four (4) on-site coaching visits with follow-up reports
  - Weekly virtual coaching calls with school's BARR Coordinator
  - 24/7 access to BARR Coach
- Training: Two (2) days of training on BARR model implementation for up to 60 participants
- Curriculum:
  - BARR Model Implementation Manual: Three (3) hard copies with jump drive and DVD
  - I-Time Curriculum (Volume I): 20 hard copy editions (for secondary school contracts)
  - U-Time Curriculum (Volume I): 10 hard copy editions each of K-2 and 3-5 editions (for elementary school contracts)
- Annual Report
  - Annual implementation summary
  - Report on student outcomes
  - Annual survey of teacher perceptions
  - Annual survey of student perceptions (secondary schools only)
- BARR Educator Network membership and benefits including:
  - BARR Coordinators' Professional Learning Community peer-sharing webinars
  - BARR Administrators' Professional Learning Community peer-sharing webinars
  - BARR member rate for National Conference registration
- Access to BARR Basecamp online resource portal:
  - BARR Model Implementation Manual
  - I-Time Curriculum, Volumes 1-3 (for secondary school contracts)
  - U-Time Curriculum, Volumes 1-3 (for elementary school contracts)
  - Tools including guidelines, templates, videos, agendas, rubrics, and forms

##### Year 2:

- Coaching:
  - Three (3) on-site coaching visits with follow-up reports
  - Weekly virtual coaching calls with school's BARR Coordinator
  - 24/7 access to BARR Coach
- Training: Two (2) days of training on additional BARR implementation topics for up to 60 participants
- Annual Report

- Annual implementation summary
- Report on student outcomes
- Annual survey of teacher perceptions
- Annual survey of student perceptions (secondary schools only)
- BARR Educator Network membership and benefits including:
  - BARR Coordinators' Professional Learning Community peer-sharing webinars
  - BARR Administrators' Professional Learning Community peer-sharing webinars
  - BARR member rate for National Conference registration
- Access to BARR Basecamp online resource portal:
  - BARR Model Implementation Manual
  - I-Time Curriculum, Volumes 1-3 (for secondary school contracts)
  - U-Time Curriculum, Volumes 1-3 (for elementary school contracts)
  - Tools including guidelines, templates, videos, agendas, rubrics, and forms

### **Year 3:**

- Coaching:
  - Three (3) on-site coaching visits with follow-up reports
  - Weekly virtual coaching calls with school's BARR Coordinator
  - 24/7 access to BARR Coach
- Training: Two (2) days of training on additional BARR implementation topics for up to 60 participants
- Annual Report
  - Annual implementation summary
  - Report on student outcomes
  - Annual survey of teacher perceptions
  - Annual survey of student perceptions (secondary schools only)
- BARR Educator Network membership and benefits including:
  - BARR Coordinators' Professional Learning Community peer-sharing webinars
  - BARR Administrators' Professional Learning Community peer-sharing webinars
  - BARR member rate for National Conference registration
- Access to BARR Basecamp online resource portal:
  - BARR Model Implementation Manual
  - I-Time Curriculum, Volumes 1-3 (for secondary school contracts)
  - U-Time Curriculum, Volumes 1-3 (for elementary school contracts)
  - Tools including guidelines, templates, videos, agendas, rubrics, and forms